

Church at home

East Leake Methodist Church 2020

Sit comfortably in a quiet place and prepare, start with a brief period of silence, turning your mind and spirit towards God. You may want to have a cross or candle in view as a focus.

Hymn: Come you thankful people come (StF 123)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=--xI8evsJk8>

Reading Psalm 65

Opening Prayer

Living God,
creator of all that is, and has been, and shall be,
we thank you for this glad season and this special day.

You have blessed us in so much:
help us to respond

We thank you for our world
with all its rich and wonderful variety
for your gift of life
constantly being renewed by your loving hand.
for all that you have made to grow and flourish around us,
all that provides our food and clothing
all the bountiful resources of this astonishing planet

You have blessed us in so much:
help us to respond

We thank you for those to whom we owe this harvest -
workers on farms and in agriculture,
sailors and fishermen
who risk their lives on the seas,
miners and engineers
who help supply the raw materials for industry

scientists and technicians
who help develop better crops,
employees in shops and factories
who labour to satisfy our demands,

You have blessed us in so much:

help us to respond

Living God,
help us to appreciate all so many do
to bring us the fruits of creation,
and teach us the part we must play
in ensuring future generations can enjoy it in turn.
Teach us to use your gifts wisely,
responsibly,
effectively,
so that nothing may be needlessly wasted
Or foolishly squandered.

You have blessed us in so much:

help us to respond

Help us to remember those who do not share equally
in the rewards of harvest -
the poor,
the hungry
the homeless,
the oppressed,
those overwhelmed by disaster,
and those whose crops have failed,
Save us we pray, from selfish indulgence,
looking to our comforts and ignoring their needs.
Inspire us to share from our plenty with all who cry out for help

You have blessed us in so much:

help us to respond

Living God
You have provided beyond our needs,
enough for all in every place
to have enough and more than enough.
forgive us that some still go hungry

and forgive our part within that
Stir our hearts so that we may challenge
the consciences of governments and- nations
until the time comes at last
when your gifts are shared and enjoyed by all

You have blessed us in so much:
help us to respond

**in the name of the name of Christ
Amen.**

Lords Prayer

Reading Genesis 8:15-22

Reading: Matthew 6:25-33

Hymn: Seek ye first (StF 254)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1Y8Naj3RFk>

Address:

Recently my family has been binge watching past series of Master chef Australia, one of the things I seem to catch is the mass surging exodus when the budding Master chefs rush off to gather the fresh ingredients for their dish. I used to think the old January Sales were bad enough but there has been shades of that in the Pantry where all the ingredients are laid out. I suppose the main thing is apart from what do I need is the fact that they do not have to stop and think "Can I afford this?". The priority need is to seek out the best foods to meet the criteria of a particular dish. The nearest memory I have of such a selection of food is the visits Ellinor and I made to the Open Air Market in Stockton-on-Tees when we took up my first appointment in 1982. Stockton at that time boasted the widest High Street in England and possibly the whole of the UK, consequently the market, which filled the High Street from one end to the other was huge. Many of the stalls heaved with fresh fruit and vegetables, we were spoiled for choice.

This time of year many of us are used to seeing our Churches and Chapels heaving with fruit and vegetables, some of which we may have grown in garden or allotment. Some times Harvest Festivals have also shown – fish (especially when celebrated in a fishing Port), coal (especially when celebrating on a coalfield) or in one situation

models of industrial machinery (in a West Yorkshire village more used to engineering than agriculture). Thanksgiving for the Harvest includes so much, not just the food we eat and appreciate but those who grow it, transport it, sell it, cook it too. We give thanks to God also for the water, the rain that falls on the crops, the husbanding of fresh water that we need to wash, to drink and support nature in all its fullness. There's a thanksgiving, of sorts, too for education, the fruit of knowledge that enables all these things and more. As I mentioned a moment ago there is thanksgiving for industry, the clothes we wear, the shoes on our feet, the homes we live in, the medicines we take, we sometimes take these things for granted but we certainly would not benefit without them.

Of course there is fruit that many people do not even stop to think about yet thanks to God should be given daily for His gift of these. They are listed in the Bible quite clearly – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. I remember clearly learning a worship song some years ago based on these fruit and on those rare occasions when I fail to remember them all I still find myself singing the song and remember them easily and correctly. Do you exhibit the Fruit of the Spirit in your life? Which is your favourite? Have you harvested them all?

Think of each of these fruit:

Love – how do you show your love for and towards others

Joy – is it evident in how you look and act?

Peace – does it flow from you and affect others?

Patience – does anger and frustration get the better of you?

Kindness – how do you display this in difficult situations?

Goodness – can people say you're good for nothing in the most positive way?

Faithfulness – do you show the Lord you are his and his alone?

Gentleness – Is your touch and are your words displaying the tenderest of God's presence?

Self-control – have you ?

Which variety of the Fruit of the Spirit appears most in your life? Note that they are collectively known as the Fruit of the Spirit rather than fruits, they are all one rather than various projections. Can you imagine what would happen if one tree grew several different fruit! We could possibly recognise an apple tree and I'm certain we know what sort of tree bananas grow on. Surely everyone knows the difference, if each tree grew various fruit – what chaos would follow? Yet for us to display all the Fruit of the Spirit is all we can ask of the Lord.

Prayer of intercession

Lord of all,
as we thank you for our harvest
we remember those who do not celebrate
those whose harvest is poor or non-existent,
those with insufficient resources to tend their land
those denied a just reward for their labours.
those whose harvest has been destroyed
in the chaos of war or by natural disaster.

Lord, you have blessed us richly:
teach us to remember others.

Help us, as we celebrate our plenty,
to remember those who have so much less
the poor and needy of our world
driven by famine, disaster or civil war
to the brink of starvation.
Help us to respond with love and concern,
offering whatever help we can.

Lord, you have blessed us richly:
teach us to remember others.

Lord of all,
speak to us at this harvest time,
So that our hearts may be stirred
and our consciences quickened.
Teach us to share our bounty with those who have nothing
so that the time may one day come
when all have enough and none too much.

Lord, you have blessed us richly:
teach us to remember others.

**in the name of Christ
Amen.**

Hymn: For the fruits of all creation (StF 124)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hfXziMbZyCI>

Blessing

Go out into the world rejoicing,
for God is waiting to meet you
and surprise you with the beauty of his presence.
In the song of a blackbird, the hooting of an owl,
the cry of a fox:
in the opening of a bud, the fragrance of a flower,
the falling of a leaf:
in the murmur of the breeze, the rushing of the wind,
the howling of the gale:
in the babbling of the brook, the rippling of the stream,
the crashing of the waves:
in the peace of the meadows, the freedom of the hills,
the grandeur of the mountains:
in the cry of a baby, the laughter of children,
the hum of conversation:
in the pat on the shoulder, the handshake of welcome,
the embrace of a loved one:
in the noise of the factory, the routine of the office,
the hustle of the shop -
God is here,
God is there,
God is everywhere.
Go then,
and travel with him,
in the light of his love,
and the fullness of life.

Amen